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Tuesday, 25 July 2017

It's Official: Australians are concerned about security

Turnbull Government's move to consolidate security agencies into new Home Affairs 'super' Ministry a deft response to rising community fears

New research finds 65% of Australians are now 'security conscious'; 58% feel 'crime is a growing problem in my community'; 45% feel 'less safe' than they used to and 61% believe the 'fundamental values of our society are under threat'.

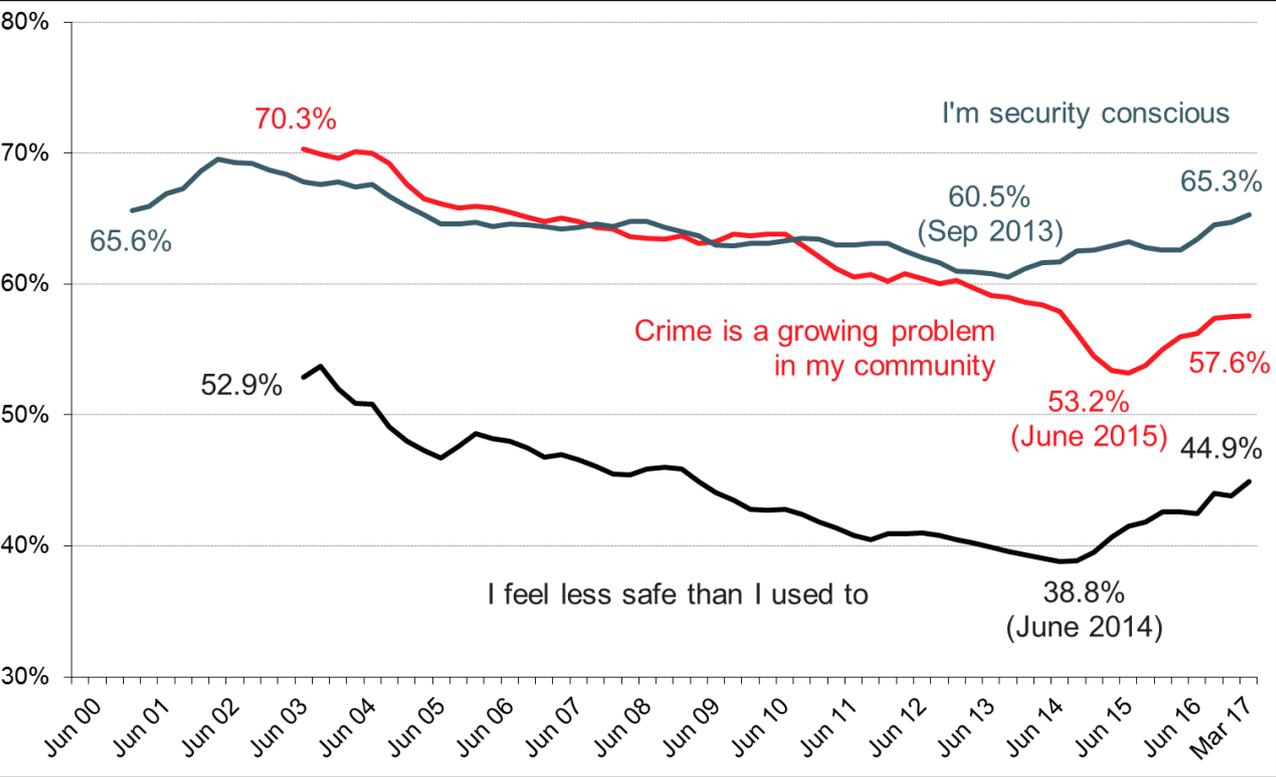
In the decade between 2003 and 2013 Australians gradually became less concerned about threats to our security, safety and fundamental values.

Since September 2013 we've seen a serious change – in Sep 2013 security consciousness reached a low point of 60.5%, then in December 2013 security consciousness began to increase and has increased steadily until now 65% of Australians agree 'I'm security conscious'; only 29% disagree and 5% can't say.

In 2003 a majority of Australians (53%) reported feeling 'less safe' than they used to. By mid-2014, with a decade of lessening concerns about safety, only 39% felt 'less safe'. Since then fears have increased continually until now 45% report 'I feel less safe than I used to', 49% disagree and 6% can't say.

Fear of crime on a local level had dropped consistently since 2003 when 70% of Australians reported that crime was a growing problem in their local community. However, since bottoming in June 2015 when 53% were concerned about 'growing crime', now a clear majority of 58% agree 'Crime is a growing problem', 40% disagree and 2% can't say.

% of Australians who agree with statement



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source (April 1999 – March 2017). Approximately 10,000 per year on average.
Base: Australians 14+.

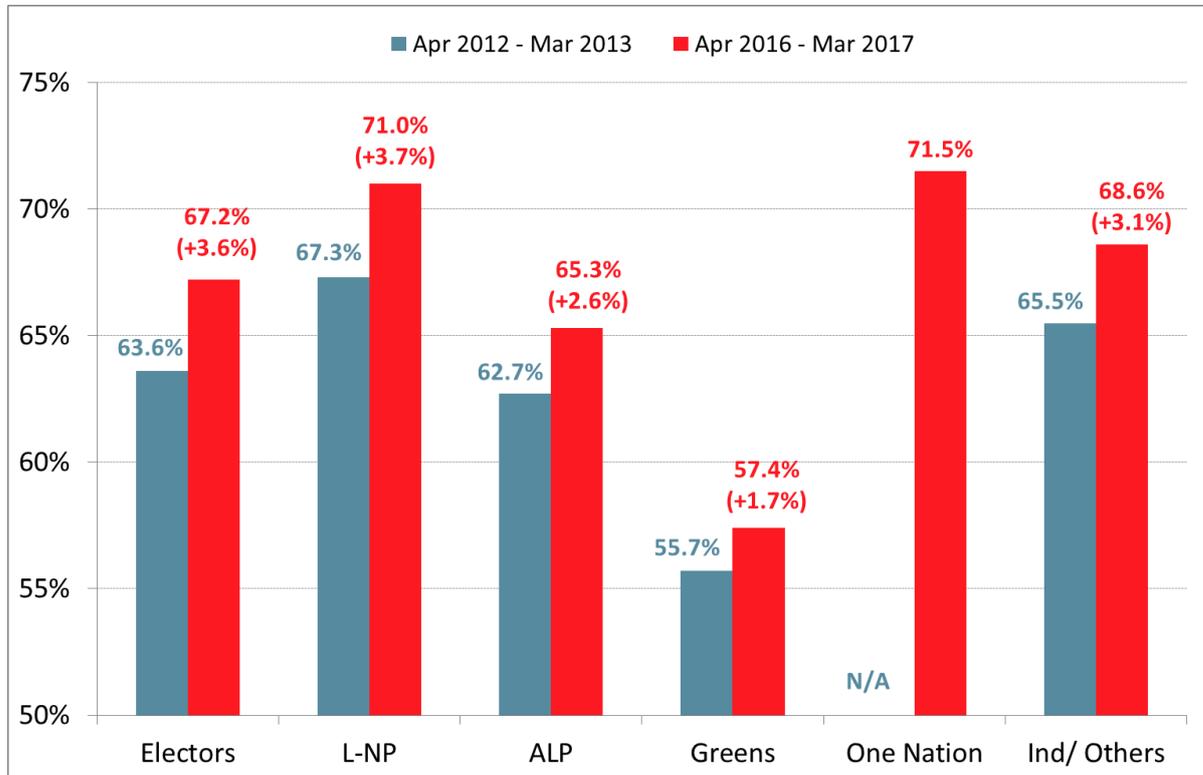
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Security concerns on the rise across the political spectrum

Politically these results are important – especially as ‘electors’ consistently show higher levels of fear and concern than Australians in general.

Analysis by political affiliation shows L-NP supporters more likely than their ALP counterparts to be concerned. One Nation and ‘Other party’ supporters show greatest levels of fear and concern; and Greens supporters least concerned. However heightened concern is recorded among supporters of every political party.

% of Australian Voters who agree “I’m security conscious”



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source: April 2012 – March 2013, n = 12,102 Australian electors, and April 2016 – March 2017, n = 9,004 Australian electors.

Although the greatest levels of fear are experienced by the most conservative voters it is important to understand this increased concern about security, safety and threats to our fundamental values do not represent a general swing back to conservative values.

Indeed, Roy Morgan has consistently shown Australians becoming more progressive and open-minded – as manifest in an increasing majority support for such issues as ‘gay couples adopting children’ and increasing numbers identifying as ‘socially progressive’.

The concerns highlighted here relate to the broader context of increasing concerns about war and terrorism. As reported previously by [Roy Morgan’s time series’ with qualitative research on Australians’ views of Australian and World issues](#), war, terrorism and global unrest are the world’s biggest problems.

So it is official, Australians are concerned and we are expressing that concern in fear for our safety, security, and into deeper worries about the fundamental values of our society.

Michele Levine, CEO, Roy Morgan Research says:

“Security concerns have been on the rise in Australia for a number of years now – pre-dating the political excitement surrounding the election of Donald Trump as US President last year and the decision by Britons to vote narrowly for ‘Brexit’ from the European Union just over a year ago.

“Increasing majorities of Australians now agree that ‘I’m security conscious’ – now 65.3%, up 4.8ppts since September 2013 and that ‘Crime is a growing problem in my community’ – now 57.6%, up 4.4ppts since bottoming only two years ago in June 2015. In addition, an increasing proportion of Australians agree that ‘I feel less safe than I used to’ – now 44.9%, up 6.1ppts over the past three years.

“Given the prevailing public mood of recent years, the Turnbull Government’s decision this month to create a new Home Affairs ‘super’ Ministry combining the Australian Federal Police (AFP), Australian Security Intelligence Operation (ASIO), and the Australian Border Force (ABF) all reporting to the newly created Home Affairs Minister could prove to be an astute political decision.

“Turnbull’s decision to place Immigration Minister, and potential right-wing leadership rival Peter Dutton, in charge of the new Ministry gives Dutton added responsibilities and ties Dutton’s fortunes more closely to the Prime Minister.

“However, despite the recent speculation about Dutton’s leadership aspirations, a recent [Roy Morgan Poll conducted in March on the preferred leader of the Coalition](#) showed that Foreign Minister Julie Bishop (30%) was preferred to Turnbull (27%) while only 5% of electors supported Peter Dutton for the leadership – behind Bishop, Turnbull, former Prime Minister Tony Abbott (9%) and equal with Nationals Leader Barnaby Joyce (5%).”

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About Roy Morgan Research

Roy Morgan Research is the largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state of Australia, as well as in Indonesia, the United States and the United Kingdom. A full service research organisation specialising in omnibus and syndicated data, Roy Morgan Research has over 70 years’ experience in collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

Margin of Error

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. Margin of error gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

| Sample Size | Percentage Estimate | | | |
|-------------|---------------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| | 40%-60% | 25% or 75% | 10% or 90% | 5% or 95% |
| 10,000 | ±1.0 | ±0.9 | ±0.6 | ±0.4 |
| 20,000 | ±0.7 | ±0.6 | ±0.4 | ±0.3 |
| 50,000 | ±0.4 | ±0.4 | ±0.3 | ±0.2 |